

1556.

SOME
CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE
British FISHERIES.
WITH A
PROPOSAL
FOR ESTABLISHING
A General Fishery,
ON THE
COASTS of *IRELAND*.

Addressed
To the Rt. Honourable the Lord——

D U B L I N:

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DAMAGE FISHERRIES.

WITH A

P R O P O S A L



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BY

To the Rt. Honorable the Lord

D U B L I N :

Printed by James Wilson, in Dublin, 1850.

[Price Two pence]



SOME
CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE

British Fisheries, &c.

My Lord,

WHILE the *Scotch* Fishery lately undertaken by *British* Adventurers, makes so great a Noise in the World ; while our News-papers are in a manner filled with Accounts of the various Preparations making to effect it ; while it chiefly engrosses the Attention of all our Coffee-houses, and is in a manner become the sole Topic of all private Conversation ; while all Orders and Degrees of Men in *Britain* seem big with Expectation of the Issue of it ; while we behold it forwarded by a Royal Bounty, countenanced by the Ministry, and protected by the Navy : A Man must be utterly insensible to every Thing af-

fecting the Publick, who could let slip so extraordinary an Occurrence, without a due Examination of the Motives productive of so uncommon a Zeal for that Establishment.

And as every Person, who sincerely wishes the Welfare and Prosperity of his Country, thinks himself in some Measure obliged to communicate whatever occurs to him, which he really thinks may be conducive to those Ends ; I shall therefore, in the following Pages, cursorily consider the *Foreign Fisheries* of *Britain* ; the superior Advantages to be expected from their *Home Fishery* ; and the Reason why it has hitherto been so long neglected. I shall also consider how *we* are at present circumstanced in regard to Trade ; how far an extensive Fishery upon our own Coasts may be useful and necessary to us ; and by what Means practicable in our present Situation.

That the *English*, in many Instances, have considered *Fisheries* in general as well worthy their Regard is plain. At the Treaty of *Utrecht*, the *New-found-Land* Fishery was strenuously insisted upon ; and, at that time, thought no trifling Acquisition : Accordingly for these many Years past, numbers of Ships have been constantly sent out upon that Service. The *New-England* Fishery is thought of such Consequence, that a *Man of War* is constantly stationed (even in time of Peace) to protect the Ships and Vessels in that Service ; and even to attend them to *Tortuga* for their Salt. The present expensive Settlement at *Nova Scotia*, we are told, is principally intended for the carrying on a Fishery there. Nay, the Whale Fishery, at different Times, has also been attempted, and great Encouragement lately granted by the *British* Parliament for the Revival of it : While their *Home Fisheries* (infinitely more advantageous

tageous, if put upon a proper footing) have hitherto been totally neglected ; altho' the *Dutch*, by their unwearied Endeavours to preserve that Trade *intire* to themselves, have plainly evinced the Importance of it ; and which, indeed, is manifest to all the World, as they employ several Hundreds of their Ships, or Busses, and many Thousands of their Seamen and others in that Trade ; and to upwards of a million Sterling Profit every Year, if the late Sir *William Temple's* Estimate thereof can be depended on.

Is it not then strange ! That so advantageous a Trade, should have been for such a length of Time so intirely disregarded ; and by a set of Men too, who, in other Respects, seem attentive enough to their own Interests ; and which Providence (from their happy Situation) seems so immediately to have pointed to them.

The only Colour of Reason I have ever heard assigned for such a surprizing Negligence is from an apprehension of interfering with, and by that Means disobliging our good Friends the *Dutch* : But surely no thinking Man can suppose, from the Nature of the Thing, That a *Permission* to them (no matter how often ratified) should be construed to *exclude* ourselves ! If I should grant a Gentleman a Liberty to fish in a Pond of mine, am I therefore debarred the Liberty of ever fishing in it again myself !——Ridiculous !—

But whether the extraordinary Value the *French* lately set upon their *Foreign Fisheries*, has prompted the *English* more carefully to consider the Advantages arising from Fisheries in general ; and from thence more attentively to examine their own Rights and Interests in their *Home Fisheries*, (as one might almost

almost be tempted to imagine) or to what other Motive soever it is owing ; so it is nevertheless that they seem at present, as roused from their long Supineness ; they seem now thoroughly sensible of the vast Importance of that most invaluable Branch of Trade ; and thoroughly determined to exert themselves to the utmost to establish it, upon a solid Basis ; which no doubt their own Strength and Affluence will effectually empower them to execute with Success.

Since then the *English*, who abound in Wealth, who have already the Benefit of so many different Fisheries, besides an universal foreign Trade, and every Encouragement, that the Power or Wit of Man can devise for its Advancement, are thus laying themselves out for establishing their *Home Fishery* : Does it not behove us, *as we are circumstanced*, to take the Hint from them ? Does it not behove Us, as far as in our Power, to make the most of *our Situation* also ? Since then we are under no Restraints in that particular, let us endeavour at something of the same Kind here : Our Coasts abound with Fish in as great a Degree almost as *Scotland*. Let us not then be so indolent, and utterly insensible to our own Interests, as not to stretch out our Hands to take the Wealth, Providence thus kindly sends us to our Doors ? Let Us, on the contrary, endeavour to the utmost to add an *extensive Fishing Trade* to our Linen Manufacture ? And as we seem determined to immerse ourselves in Luxury, much beyond our present Abilities ; let us by this Means endeavour to raise a Fund sufficient (if possible) to support the vast Expence ; which, whatever we may think, cannot last long upon our present Bottom, as a very transient View of our present Condition, will but too evidently manifest.

As to our foreign Trade then, from whence only, in an Island *like ours*, Affluence ought reasonably to be

be expected, the bare mention of it, will, I am afraid, be turned to Ridicule ; at least an Attempt to paint it in its present State, would look so like hanging out a Picture of a *lifeless Phantom*, that I shall wave the distasteful Task.

As to our Home Produce, our Wool, and Woollen Manufacture, indeed, if permitted us, would ——— But not to give Offence, that disagreeable Article I shall also pass by in Silence.

Our Linen Manufacture then is almost all we have to boast of ; all we have to subsist upon ; all we have to answer the vast Demands made upon us ; and all we have to keep our gasping Country from inevitable Ruin. I hope, however, it will be permitted me, to give my opinion freely, and without Offence, upon that Branch of Trade ; which (notwithstanding it has been so often *recommended* to us, as an unexhaustible Fund of Wealth ; as the only Branch of Trade worthy our Regard ; and which, indeed, our People of Condition lay themselves out to the utmost to promote, *exclusive of all others*) does not, I own, appear to me of Consequence sufficient to answer *all* the Ends expected from it.

'Tis true, the Linen Trade has been, and may be, of vast Advantage to the inland Parts of this poor Kingdom. But of what Use (in regard to that Trade only) are all the safe, the numerous Ports, with which Providence has blessed us ? For all the Linens, which the united Industry of the whole Kingdom could possibly manufacture, may easily be exported in a very few Bottoms, and from one such Port only. All others, with regard to that Trade only, are therefore intirely superfluous.

The Linen Manufacture, therefore, (scarce sufficient to answer the Calls of our Absentees, as was long
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since proved,) seems to have been thrown out to us (as a Barrel to a Whale) to employ us to little or no Advantage, and to withdraw our Attention from all foreign Trade ; for which we are so happily situated, and which, no doubt, we should long since otherwise have been grasping at.

Since then the Linen Manufacture is so little conducive to the Employment of our Seamen, to the Encrease of our Shipping, to the occupying our Ports, or indeed to the Advancement of Trade in general ; and since we have, in a great Measure, already extended that Manufacture as far as it will go ; and as we are *greatly confined* in every other Branch of Trade ; surely it behoves us to be particularly attentive to the Advantages that may naturally arise from our *Situation* ; and while all the World around us (however heretofore reproachable for Indolence) are now assiduous to the last Degree for the Advancement of their Commerce ; let us not supinely acquiesce with the poor Pittance we have hitherto enjoyed : Let us, in G—d's Name, make the most of our Linen Trade : But let it not *exclude* all others ! I own, it is with Concern that I behold all our Endeavours, all our Thoughts, turned that way *only* ; and every Attempt, every Proposal, for Advancement of Trade, in any other Channel, treated with the utmost Derision and Contempt, or as chimerical and vain. 'Tis with Concern I see those few Gentlemen, who are willing to promote the publick Welfare, expending large Sums to establish the different Branches of that Manufacture on their own Estates ; which, however laudable in the Intention, and useful to the interior Parts of the Kingdom, can but in a very stinted Degree answer the End proposed : For I must crave Leave to assert, That the Money so expended cannot possibly turn to near so great Advantage, either to the Individual

vidual, or the Publick, which much smaller Sums would do, if laid out in establishing a GENERAL FISHERY upon our own Coasts : For, however hitherto overlooked, however generally disregarded, an *extensive well conducted Fishery* has ever been considered by the thinking Part of Mankind as teeming with numberless Advantages ; as will demonstrably appear if the following Calculations (taken from the *London General Evening Post*, of the Twenty fourth of *August* last ; and inserted from thence in the *Dublin Journal* of the Second of *September* last) may in any Measure be depended on. It is therein asserted, That the present Adventurers in the *Scotch Fishery* (having raised a Fund of 50,000*l.* only for carrying on that undertaking) will be thereby enabled annually to employ, to very great Advantage, 500 Ships of different Burthens in that Service : And (including all the Branches of the different Trades necessary for carrying on so extensive an Undertaking) that they will also annually employ 50,000 Persons of both Sexes, besides 28,000 Seamen. So that (supposing the above Calculation to be right,) if we can raise but half that Sum for establishing such an Undertaking on our own Coasts, We shall also be enabled annually to employ 250 Ships, more than we do at present ; and also 39,000 Persons of both Sexes (14,000 Seamen included) who all now in a manner want Bread. What an Accession of Wealth, what an Addition of Trade, what an Encrease of Shipping, what Employment for Numbers, must such an Undertaking then naturally produce ?

If then such Advantages necessarily result from such an Establishment, should we delay, should we hesitate one Moment to set about it ? Especially if it be duly considered, that upon a late Attempt in that

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Way among the *Northern* Isles by private Adventurers from this City, the Inhabitants would not permit them, either to land or fish there; of which the present Adventurers in *England* are so sensible, that they have sent thither Engineers, furnished with proper Materials for erecting Forts in convenient Places to protect them in their Undertaking. If however they should meet with such Obstructions, either from the Inhabitants, the *Dutch*, or otherwise, as might in any Sort debar them from Fishing to Advantage there; what should hinder them from establishing their Design on our Coasts, when intirely un-occupied by us? Then should we look back with Regret. Then— But the bare Mention of the Possibility will, I hope, *in Time*, remove the Apprehension.

If any Doubt, however, should arise as to a Plenty of Fish on our own Coasts sufficient to answer so extensive an Undertaking; effectually to remove such Doubts, I beg Leave to refer to the Report of the *Dublin Society*, as published in *Faulkner's Journal* of the 3d of *June* last; where we shall find, that one Mr. *Richard Mead* of *Bantry* in the County of *Cork*, to intitle him to a Præmium promised by Dr. *Madden*, fully proved to the said Society, that he had within the Year preceding caught and cured 380,800 Fish of different Kinds, six Score to the Hundred; a prodigious Taking for one Man indeed! And to shew that even such Taking was no casual Thing, Mr. *John Young* of the same Place, the Year preceding, proved also to the said Society, that within that Year, he had caught and cured 482,590 Herrings, and 231 Barrels of Sprats. If then private Adventurers, singly, with small Funds, and in a very stinted Way, are able to do so much, what may not reasonably be expected, if a sufficient Fund were raised, and a general *Fishery* established! Besides, if it be considered, that in the Quantities of Fish taken as above,
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none but Herrings and Sprats are particularly mentioned, and that they can only be taken in one particular Season of the Year; what might not also reasonably be expected, if the Fishery were made as extensive as it might be? And Boats and Men constantly employed to take all other Kinds of Fish, with which our Coasts so plentifully abound? Such as Ling, Codd, Haddock, Haick, Mulletts, Bafs, Nouds, Gurnards, Whittings, Mackerells, &c. all which might be dried, and exported, to very great Advantage. Besides all Kinds of flat Fish, as Turbot, Bret, Soals, Plaaise, Flounders, Rays, &c. which, if sold at Home, would not only furnish the Tables of the better Sort at a much cheaper Rate than at present; but would also yield a prodigious Supply of wholesome Food for our industrious Poor, who at present feed in such a Manner, that it is shameful even to mention.

Since then the Undertaking is naturally productive of such vast Advantages, and the Success thereof reduced almost to Certainty; I hope I shall not be thought too presuming, if I should, in the most earnest Manner, recommend the immediate Execution of it.

But while we idly lavish Thousands every Year at Plays, Ridottos, Festino's, Gardens, Consorts, Horse-Races, &c. while Numbers of our Nobility, and People of Fortune, mis-spend most of the Income of their Estates abroad; while almost the Whole of the remaining Produce of the Kingdom is spent on foreign Superfluities; what a shameful Reproach, what a mortifying Reflection would it cast upon us? And in what a contemptible Light must we appear to all the World? If so advantageous, so extensive an Undertaking, should be set aside, or neglected, for want of so small, so inconsiderable a Sum to set it

on Foot. But I own, while we have among us a Body of Men so truly Humane, so vastly Opulent, as all or most of our *dignify'd Clergy* are well known to be; while we have still left among us, such a *generous*, such an *affluent Nobility*; while we have so many noble Spirits, possessed of our *greatest Employments*, who are always ready and willing to promote the Interest of the Country they preside over; while there is visible among us such a laudable Spirit for Improvement, such a glorious Emulation for the Advancement of Arts and Sciences; while our Men of Figure think themselves highly slighted if their Names are not inserted among some or other of the Societies established for promoting the publick Welfare; I will not—I cannot suppose, there can be any want of publick Spirit, on so important an Occasion.

I shall therefore (with a chearful Expectation of being attended to) most humbly propose; that a **SUBSCRIPTION** be forthwith set on Foot for raising the Sum of 25000*l.* by 250 Subscriptions, of 100*l. Sterling* each; such Subscriptions to be received, and taken in, at some particular Bank to be appointed for that Purpose; and to be drawn out from thence as Occasion shall require, for the erecting and carrying on a FISHERY, as above: And that, as soon as the said Subscription shall be full, the Subscribers (at a general Meeting to be appointed for that purpose) do from among themselves appoint a Committee, (Five or more of whom to be a Quorum) to transact and direct all Matters relating to the erecting and carrying on the said Fishery: And for that Purpose, that they be impowered to make any Contracts, or Agreements, for any Buildings, Ships, Boats, or any other Wares or Merchandizes, of what Sort or Kind soever, which they shall judge necessary, for erecting and carrying on the said Fishery to advantage: And that all Money necessary for those Purposes, as
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also for all Rent, Servants Wages, and other incidental Charges, be issued and paid by their Order only: And that they be impowered to appoint all Servants, which, from time to time, may be thought necessary to be employed therein; such as a Treasurer, Secretary, President, Clerks, Overseers of the different Branches of the Fishery, and all subordinate Servants, &c. and from whom all such are to receive Instructions, and to whom also they are to be accountable: That at the above Meeting, other proper Times for general Meetings be appointed, when all Accounts relating to the Fishery are to be prepared, and laid before every such general Board, for their Inspection; at which Times, Dividends of the Profits be also declared and appointed; and a Report to be then also made of the Behaviour of the several Officers and Servants, and they to be continued or removed, according to their Behaviour. And at such first Meeting (after fixing upon a proper Place for the Fishery,) that some one or more of the Committee be impowered to take in Lease for a competent Term of Years (on Behalf of all the Subscribers) a proper Piece of Ground in such Place for erecting Habitations for the Officers and Servants, to be employed; and such Ware-houses, Work-houses, Shedd, and Stages, &c. as may be thought requisite: With due Regard, however, (when fixing upon such Place for the Fishery,) to the Safety of the Boats and Vessels, while in Port, as well as to their safe and easy Passage into and out of it. It will be needless to mention further Particulars, which will naturally occur at such a Meeting; and to which, therefore, I shall with all due Deference refer.

I must, however, in the mean Time, beg Leave to observe, that when, by means of the above mention'd Fund, such a Fishery, as I have been recommending, shall be thoroughly established; and the Profit and other
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Advantages arising from it, become publickly known; it may reasonably be expected, that other Fisheries, in a more inferior Degree, will also be set on Foot, in different Parts of the Kingdom. So that from our *Fisheries*, when thus become *general*, most of our common People, who are, at present, seen strolling about in Numbers (begging for want of Work) may happily find Employment, to great Advantage, both to themselves, and to the Publick; and the many poor Wretches who go to *England*, and even to *Wales*, every Year, in search of Bread (half of whom scarce ever return again) may also be profitably employ'd at home; which surely is a Matter of the utmost Consequence; as from our own Case 'tis plain, that 'tis not to Numbers, but to Numbers usefully employed, the Wealth of every Country is owing.

Now, if I have been able to convince our few money'd Men, that 'twill be greatly their Interest to promote our Fisheries, I must also crave Leave to represent, that the Rents of all the Sea Ports occupied thereby, and all the Lands contiguous to such Sea Ports, must of Course rise in Proportion as that Trade encreases.

So that all Orders and Degrees of Men, the Rich, the Poor, the Trading and the Landed Interests, will all find their Account in such a general Undertaking, when once thoroughly Established.

But, as a Proposal of this Nature, however Useful to the Publick, cannot be brought to Maturity, or indeed duly attended to, without the Countenance and Protection of some Person of eminent publick Spirit and unfully'd Honour; to whom then could I so properly apply, on this Occasion, as to your Lordship, whose superior Character is so thoroughly established, and who are always ready
and

and willing to promote every Undertaking (how difficult soever) that may prove any way serviceable to your Country. With Confidence, therefore, I address the foregoing Proposal to your Lordship: Not doubting, but that Gentlemen of Honour and Fortune will be prompted chearfully to contribute to so laudable a Design; when they know the Undertaking proposed has been thoroughly Examined and approved by a Person of your Lordship's well-known Integrity, and Approved Abilities.

I am,

My Lord,

With very great Respect,

Your Lordship's very humble Servant.